

***Section I — Introduction***



***This document is the comprehensive update of the City of Riverside's General Plan. It is a statement of the City's vision of its future and a guide for the development of Riverside to the year 2010.***



### ***A. What is a General Plan?***

A General Plan is a guide for community decision makers. It is a statement of a community's vision for its own future and a road map providing the direction to achieve that vision. The view of the future expressed in the Plan is shaped by basic community values, ideals and aspirations about the best management of the natural and man-made environments.

In addition to defining the community's view of its future, the General Plan describes actions the community can take to achieve that desired future. The Plan uses text and diagrams to establish policies and programs the City may use in addressing the many physical, economic and social issues facing the community. The Plan is thus a tool for managing community change to achieve the desired quality of life.

### ***B. Why Plan?***

Successful communities don't just happen; they must be continually shaped and guided. A community must actively manage its growth and respond to changing circumstances if it is to meet the needs of its residents. State law supports this belief that communities should plan for the future by requiring cities and counties to adopt General Plans. Section 65300 of the Government Code states:

*"Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning."*

### ***C. What is in a General Plan?***

State legislation provides a detailed list of issues to be addressed in General Plans. Section 65302 of the Government Code requires that plans address major issues in seven basic areas or elements. The General Plan may be organized in any manner that meets the needs of the community, as long as it addresses the topics specified for these mandatory Elements. The seven Plan Elements required by the general plan laws are:

#### ***1. Land Use Element***

A Land Use Element which designates the proposed general distribution, location, and extent (including standards for population density and building intensity) of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private use.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These and other terms used in this document are defined in the glossary, found in Appendix A (Page X - 2).



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### ***2. Transportation Element***

A Transportation Element consisting of plans for the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other transportation-related facilities.

### ***3. Housing Element***

A Housing Element consisting of policies and programs for the provision of adequate housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community.

### ***4. Conservation Element***

A Conservation Element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

### ***5. Open Space Element***

An Open Space Element identifying plans and measures for the preservation of open space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and identification of agricultural land.

### ***6. Noise Element***

A Noise Element which specifies and appraises noise problems in the community, and which establishes standards for identifying noise compatible land uses.

### ***7. Safety Element***

A Safety Element for the protection of the community from any undue risks related to natural and man-made hazards. The safety element includes mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards.

In addition to the State-mandated elements, General Plans may include “*any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the ... city.*” (Government Code Section 65303). Riverside’s General Plan addresses air quality, energy, community character, historic preservation and economic development, as well as the topics required in seven mandatory elements described above.

## ***D. What’s in Riverside’s General Plan?***

The City of Riverside General Plan contains the state mandated elements and optional elements that apply to an area including all of the City and a portion of Riverside’s Sphere of Influence — a total land area of more than one hundred square miles. This General Plan



Area, illustrated in Exhibit 1 (Page I - 8), was selected because it includes all of the City and the area immediately adjacent to the City that is experiencing the greatest pressures for development and can potentially be provided with City services.<sup>2</sup>

### ***1. Ten Major Sections***

The General Plan document is organized in ten (10) major sections.

The first four sections provide the foundation for the policies and recommendations contained in the Plan. The first section is an **Introduction** to the purpose and contents of the Plan. The second section defines the community's **Vision** for its future and discusses the major planning concepts encompassed by the Plan.

The third section provides the **Context for Planning** in Riverside. This section includes a description of Riverside's history, its tradition of creative planning and the growth trends experienced by the community. It also includes an overview of the community today — the natural and man-made environments, the socio-economic conditions, and the existing facilities and services. This section contains projections for regional, subregional and City growth to the year 2010.

The fourth section outlines the **Planning Process**. It includes an overview of the process design, a description of the methods used to obtain community input, a summary of the analysis and research conducted as part of the process, a discussion of the Plan alternatives considered by the City and an explanation of the steps taken to prepare the environmental impact assessment for this Plan.

The next three (3) sections of the Plan organize and integrate the state mandated and optional elements into three major topics: **Resource Conservation, Community Enhancement and Growth Management**. The individual Plan Elements within each section set forth broad community goals, followed by specific policies and a discussion of implementation measures.

The Resource Conservation section contains the Conservation and Open Space Elements. Issues concerning air quality, water quality, natural resources and energy are addressed in the Conservation Element. Riverside's unique geography, climate and extensive automobile use make air quality a particularly important issue to the City. The Open Space Element deals with protection and management of open spaces and agricultural lands. Community concerns about preserving agricultural lands and protecting the steep slopes in the Box Springs Mountain area, Alessandro Heights and Norco Hills are reflected in this section.

The Community Enhancement section addresses a broad range of issues that help shape the health and character of the Riverside community. The

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<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 1 (Page I - 8) also illustrates the City's community areas — smaller areas into which the General Plan Area is divided for purposes of analysis and policy development.



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optional Community Character Element is designed to maintain the quality and character of the City's urban environment. It addresses issues of urban design, neighborhood preservation, downtown development and historic preservation. Cultural and social services such as child care, cultural facilities and libraries are also covered in this section. With over 2,055 acres of City park land and a variety of regional parks surrounding Riverside, recreational facilities, scenic routes, trails and paths play important roles in the community's character. Standards for community and neighborhood parks are established to ensure that Riverside will maintain the high level of recreational opportunity currently provided. Finally, this section addresses the vital role of economic development in maintaining a healthy community.

The Growth Management section contains five of the elements required by state law. The Land Use Element provides a framework for both public and private sector development decisions by addressing land use, water and wastewater systems, storm water management, and solid and hazardous waste management. These directives will help Riverside enjoy continuing growth, while retaining its agricultural heritage and promoting a vital downtown core. The Public Safety Element deals with issues concerning police services and the risks from earthquakes, fires and floods. The Housing Element, summarized in this section and included in full in Appendix B (*Under Separate Cover.*), provides for adequate housing to meet the needs of all of Riverside's residents and to provide Riverside's share of housing needed throughout the Southern California Region. The Transportation Element focuses on the community's transportation needs and a variety of ways to provide for those needs. The Noise Element evaluates community noise problems and establishes standards for minimizing their impact.

The eighth section, the **Area Plans** section, summarizes goals and policies addressing special concerns of particular areas within the community.

The ninth section, **Plan Implementation**, addresses the array of specific tools that can be applied to development review, redevelopment, area expansions, special area planning, public investment, community involvement, and the ongoing review or revision of this Plan. Recommendations for the use of these specific tools supplement recommendations in each of the Elements.

The General Plan document concludes with a series of **Appendices** which contain a glossary of terms used throughout the Plan, the complete Housing Element and technical materials used in Plan preparation.

### ***E. What Do These Terms Mean?***

This Plan is written for the community; it is intended to serve both technical and lay people. Therefore, its authors have avoided using jargon as much as possible. However, some special terms are necessary to express important concepts. These include:



### **1. *Area Plan***

Detailed plan focusing on a subarea of Riverside. Area Plans include specific plans and community plans adopted by the City.

### **2. *Community Areas***

An area including one or more commercial or residential neighborhoods, sharing similar characteristics of history, access, and design. Community Areas are generally defined so they fully include groups of Census Tracts or Traffic Zones in order to simplify data collection and analysis.

### **3. *General Plan Area***

The entire area encompassed by the Plan, including the land within the City limits and a portion of the land in the City's Sphere of Influence.

### **4. *Goal***

Description of a desired state of affairs for the community in the future. They are the broad public purposes toward which policies and programs are directed. Since goals are general statements, more than one set of actions could be taken to achieve each goal. In this Plan, goals are phrased to express the desired results of the Plan; they complete the sentence "Our goal is ...".

### **5. *Land Use Diagram***

Graphic representation which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of land use categories in the General Plan Area as required by Section 35302(a) of the Government Code.

### **6. *Policy***

Statements of government intent against which individual actions and decisions are evaluated. Policies are phrased as sentences, with the agency responsible for implementing the policy clearly identified. Where appropriate, these policies also include quantifiable objectives which will assist the City in evaluating the effectiveness of implementation efforts.



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### **Exhibit I - 1: General Plan & Community Areas** *(Formerly Exhibit 1)*





### **7. *Recommendations for Implementation***

Proposed specific actions which the City of Riverside may choose to take in achieving the goals of the General Plan.

### **8. *Sphere of Influence***

The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of the City of Riverside, as determined by the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) pursuant to state law. The City of Riverside Sphere of Influence is shown on Exhibit 2 (Page I - 10).



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### **Exhibit I - 2: Sphere of Influence** *(Formerly Exhibit 2)*

